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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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See Log Serial

DATE 7/7/74

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. TOLSON
MR. BELMONT
MR. DE LOACH

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I called the Attorney General and advised him I had checked both matters he had inquired about earlier today and we, of course, have never tapped Alsop's phone and have had no surveillance on [redacted]

I further advised him that Mr. DeLoach told me that Moyers told him Alsop came in to see Moyers yesterday. The Attorney General said this was the reason for his phone call. I advised him that Alsop said he was going to write a column if we didn't take it off right away. I said as far as I am concerned Alsop can write anything he pleases. The Attorney General said before we get to that, what he is trying to do now is make sure nobody did. I said it is entirely possible the Defense Department or the Comptroller General's office did. I further stated we could very readily check his (Alsop's) phone and find out but I wouldn't do that for him.

As to [redacted] I said there was no investigation by us but it is entirely possible another agency did.

The Attorney General said the thing that occurred to him is that Alsop believes this because he said something over the phone which he said to nobody else and, therefore, his phone must have been tapped, but it is possible Alsop talked on a phone that was tapped and it was not his phone. I said that is possible; that it is entirely possible these other Government agencies are tapping phones.

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The Attorney General said the President talked to him about that and he told the President he was contemplating that no taps be authorized by anyone except himself - but he has not discussed this with all the other department heads - so he would have a central control. I told him I recommended that back under Tom Clark. He said the President thought that was a good idea. He further said, if that is set up the way he would like done, the requests would come through me to him. I said I would be

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SP-2 TAP FORM - JAR

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Paras marked a thru 4/00 - 354477-390

Memorandum for Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, DeLoach March 30, 1965

when they continue to go on. I advised him that we re-evaluate each phone tap every thirty days; that I have no objection on re-evaluation to again notifying him we would like to continue the tap. He said he was thinking of a longer period. I said we could take three months or six months and he said whatever fits in with our practice. I stated I would be glad to do whatever he suggests.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

1. - Miss Holmes

Memorandum for Messrs. Tolson, Belmont, DeLoach March 30, 1965

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

glad to do that. He said McNamara is perfectly agreeable to this and McNamara thinks it is not possible in Defense without his or Vause's approval but that is not his (the Attorney General's) impression. I said it is not mine. He said he told the President he had absolutely no question about the Bureau in this regard but could not speak for the other agencies.

I stated that, if an agent should get out of line, he would be fired right away; that they understand that very clearly; that when we have requests from the field that we turn down, we don't even send them around to him; that we try to keep them down to 50 or 60 for the entire country in espionage and kidnaping cases. He remarked that kidnapings are very rare. I explained that, where the life of an individual or the life of the Nation is threatened, I think it warranted. I said that three years ago, we had about 100 and now have gotten it down to about 50 or so and the field is very sensitive to the fact that they will not be approved here unless it is something very vital; and I think this would be the only way to do it.

The Attorney General said also he would like to set up some similar procedure on microphone installations; that he really ought to be informed in this regard, not be told after but be told prior. I stated I am perfectly willing to have that done; that I see no objection. The Attorney General said he does not think it is right to put a responsibility like that on the Bureau; if anything comes out, he has to take responsibility and so he might just as well take the responsibility.

(U) I related that there are four categories: the so-called mail covers and they have been discontinued; the so-called trash covers (and we have one in Miami on a Cuban who is working for the Castro element); the other two categories are in so-called phone covers and in the microphone covers. I said we still have some microphone covers though not in large numbers; that they are largely limited to espionage and Cosa Nostra activities; but I would start right away on the microphones the way we follow on the telephones. (X)

The Attorney General indicated he wanted to discuss this with me in detail but not on the phone; that he thought on the taps we might have a system where the authorization would run for a specific time, six months or something; that as it is now he has no idea when they are taken off or

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